

a biathlon in Vermont; the Leapfest in Rhode Island; and marksmanship competitions in North Little Rock, Arkansas. Indeed, the opportunity to participate in these competitions provides incentives for National Guard recruitment and retention programs. Additionally, the competitions bring National Guard members together with Active Duty military personnel which builds better appreciation among the various components and overall force cohesiveness.

However, the playing field for the National Guard is not level with that for Active Duty military members. Currently, state National Guard units can use only non-appropriated funds to cover operating expenses for the events and for health, pay, and personal expenses for participating unit members. Because the non-appropriated funds are very limited, National Guard members must often pay out of their own pockets for expenses, including medical coverage. For Active Duty military participants, appropriated funds cover all expenses participants incur.

By authorizing the use of appropriated funds in addition to the non-appropriated funds, National Guard members participating in competitions could receive full coverage for health, pay, and personal expenses. This is particularly important for National Guard members who cannot afford medical expenses stemming from possible injuries. Additionally, the National Guard units would face fewer budget constraints when continuing to host these valuable competitions and when sending teams and individuals into competition.

Finally, it is important to note that H.R. 1705 does not recommend appropriation levels nor does the legislation create participation incentives for National Guard members which are greater than those incentives for Active Duty military.

Mr. Speaker, this Member urges his colleagues to vote for the Bereuter-Langevin amendment as an important way to show support for the men and women serving their country in our National Guard.

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Chairman, Congress authorized the original National Defense Features (NDF) program in the mid-1990s in response to a report by the Department of Defense describing a shortage of sealift capacity during military contingencies. The NDF program was considered to be the most cost-effective way to augment the substantial investment that was being made in new sealift ships by the Navy.

Since then, Congress has authorized and appropriated funds to install special defense features in new commercial vessels to be built in the shipyards of the United States. Last year, for example, at my request and as a result of the leadership of our colleague from New Jersey, Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN, the House included in the National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2001 a provision that would expand the Secretary of Defense's ability to fund militarily useful projects under the NDF program. I am pleased to report that our amendment was included in the final legislation signed into law by the President.

When the NDF program was launched, Congress expected that our allies, particularly Japan, would find mutual defense benefits in promoting the program. Under one project that has received considerable attention in the press and has the support of domestic maritime labor, ten commercial vessels would be

built in the United States based on a design funded and approved by DARPA's Maritime Technology Program. These vessels would normally operate in the Japan-United States vehicle trade, which is at present entirely dominated by Japanese carriers. Quite importantly, the vessels would be crewed by American merchant seamen, a group vital to maintaining the readiness of our military to handle contingencies abroad.

Notwithstanding expressions of support by very senior officials in our government, this expectation has not been realized. As a result, the hopes of our commercial shipbuilders and merchant mariners have not been realized, and our military planners have not been able to rely upon NDF vessels to support their contingencies operations. Much to my disappointment, the Government of Japan apparently continues to take the position that the decision to employ NDF ships is strictly a matter for the commercial judgment of Japanese vehicle manufacturing and shipping companies. The vehicle manufacturers, which operate under closely inter-locking relationships with the Japanese vehicle carriers, continue to insist that the NDF program is a matter between the two respective governments since it addresses defense.

In view of the U.S. role in providing security for our Far East allies, it hardly seems appropriate that defense concerns expressed by our government should not have been met with a more positive response. Our government's repeated representations to the Japanese government have fallen to the ground as if the NDF program was without military value, a position that is contradicted by two U.S. Navy reports on the NDF program. Taking note of the extensive military collaboration of our two governments, which it is safe to say has conferred material benefits on Japan, this is not the position that Congress should have expected.

The position that this matter is purely commercial in nature rather than governmental in character is not defensible. Japan, like other nations, supports its merchant marine with financial assistance, including direct construction loans at artificially low rates of interest. This is not the mark of a purely private industry operating under purely commercial conditions.

Based on all the evidence gathered to date, it would appear that the real reason our carriers are effectively being excluded from this market is the Japanese *kereitsu* system of doing business. In short, a fleet of U.S.-built and operated ships, commercially competitive and having significant defense value to both nations, has apparently no chance to break through the economic fence encircling the Japanese vehicle trade.

As I explained to my colleagues last year, I continue to hope that the Government of Japan and the vehicle manufacturers will ultimately see the merit of supporting the NDF program, especially given the longstanding support of the Department of Defense. But if the past is any guide, we may anticipate further intransigence. Therefore, I am joining today with my colleague from New Jersey, Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN, in introducing a bill that we intend to push later this year if we do not see any movement on the part of the Government of Japan. The bill—which is identical to the bill we introduced late last year in the form of H.R. 5488—is very straightforward. It says: If the Federal Maritime Commission finds that

vessels built under the NDF program are unable to obtain employment in a particular trade route in the foreign commerce of the United States for which they are designed to operate, and if that sector of the trade route has been dominated historically by citizens of an allied nation, then the Commission shall take action to counteract the restrictive trade practices that have led to this situation.

As I pointed out last year, it should not be necessary to enact legislation to encourage support for a program so self-evidently in the mutual security interests of our two nations. I trust that the Government of Japan will support the new consultative mechanism so that the NDF program can begin the much needed recapitalization of our aging Ready Reserve Force.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. STUMP. Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIRMAN pro tempore (Mr. LATOURETTE). All time for debate on the amendments has expired.

The question is on the amendments en bloc offered by the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. STUMP).

The amendments en bloc were agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN pro tempore. No further amendments are in order. Under the order of the House of yesterday, the Committee rises.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. WALSH) having assumed the chair, Mr. LATOURETTE, Chairman pro tempore of the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2586) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2002 for military activities of the Department of Defense, to prescribe military personnel strengths for fiscal year 2002, and for other purposes, had come to no resolution thereon.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. STUMP. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 2586.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LATOURETTE). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Arizona?

There was no objection.

#### REPORT ON H.R. 2904, MILITARY CONSTRUCTION APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2002

Mr. HOBSON, from the Committee on Appropriations, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 107-207) on the bill (H.R. 2904) making appropriations for military construction, family housing, and base realignment and closure for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2002, and for other purposes, which was referred to the Union Calendar and ordered to be printed.